

office of lands began allowing more people to sign up for new parcels, in addition to those on the previous waiting list. Thus hundreds of new names were included, some coming back from the mainland or from other countries to participate. So the number of applicants increased dramatically. If the number of 5 hectares per family is seriously considered, there is not enough land for the present generation, even if the whole island is considered as a flat, clean surface.

On October 15th, some local members of the Commission were invited to the center of Vaitea Ranch to see what lands could be given away. But it was already decided: the manager of SASIPA had a plan to reduce their herd of cattle (1300 animals) by one fourth in three years, so they still needed about 1000 hectares from the center of the Ranch to the north, at the southeast side of the road to 'Anakena. Since neither Maunga Terevaka nor Poike were available because of the poor quality of the soil, there were only 900 hectares of good land left to be distributed. So the other 600 hectares had to be taken from the Park, and Rano Kau was selected.

At this point it is impossible to describe every event, meeting and letter which followed. But I would like to mention the incredible support that came from Hawai'i in those difficult days. Back in June 1998, we had the first direct contact with the Hui Lama Science Club from the Kamehameha Schools, under the direction of Dr. Chuck Burrows and Dr. Steve Montgomery. They wanted to help Rapa Nui's forest restoration and sustainability of natural and cultural resources. They brought and planted hundreds of seeds in Rano Kau.

In October 1999, we constructed a 10 meter circular *manavai* for flora dedicated to the Rapanui people in Mataveru Otai, in the Park headquarters. Nāinoa Thompson, the navigator of the *Hōkūle'a* who had just arrived to the island, also participated by bringing the Hawaiian *aloha* spirit of the Polynesian relationship to Rapa Nui. Rapanui and Hawaiian students planted 400 seedlings of Koa (*Acacia koa*) on the slopes of Rano Kau.

After a meeting held on October 28th, at the Topa Ra'a Hotel, the headquarters of the Hui Lama, a resolution was signed by the representatives of some cultural institutions: "Whereas, in Rapa Nui we have celebrated the successful arrival of *Hōkūle'a* in the farthest corner of Polynesia on its voyage of sustainability together with the *kanaka maoli* of Hawai'i from Kamehameha Schools, Hula Halau, and the Polynesian Voyaging Society. We are now concerned about land redistribution and how its cumulative environmental impacts may affect the future of our natural and cultural patrimony as well as the safe water supply from the slopes of Rano Kau volcano above the village of Hanga Roa, and the sustainable management of our Rapa Nui National Park. We recognize that Rapa Nui is a microcosm of Earth and Humankind relationships, and can be an excellent model of recovery and sustainable development, so we hereby request the aid and advice of our Pacific family in Hawai'i *Nei* to protect the island, and to restore its forests, marine wildlife and seabird colonies. Maururu, Rodrigo Paoa Atamu, Kahu Kahu O Hera; Johnny Tuki Huckle, Tu'u Hotu Iti; Niko Haoa Cardinali, Mata Hoe Vaka Kahu O Hera; Petero Riroroko

Atan, Rapa Nui Chamber of Tourism; Sergio Rapu Haoa, Comisión de Desarrollo; José Miguel Ramírez, Parque Nacional Rapa Nui".

Several letters, emails, radio statements and newspaper articles later, I was called in and told that I had lost my position. After more letters and the intervention of a supporting politician, I was fired from CONAF.

On 10 May, *El Mercurio de Valparaíso* announced that the Regional Secretary of Lands and Governor Hey recognized that it is necessary to protect the park. This followed criticism from various groups defending the island's heritage. Now it is said that 90% of the parcels will come from Vaitea and 10% from the Park. The governor also noted there are about 900 families asking for 5 hectare parcels. Where will this land come from? The new announcement indicates that we saved Rano Kau, at least. But, on the other hand, instead of the original offering of good land from the Vaitea Ranch, lands that are useless for farming will be taken from the Park, plus a section between Rano Raraku and La Pérouse that already was bulldozed about 30 years ago. Sustainable development? Protection for the patrimony and tourism? The only protected area on the island is Vaitea (and incidentally, the "5-star resort" rumor fits perfectly now). What is not protected is the Rapa Nui National Park, declared a World Heritage Site in 1995.

Moai Sightings



MOAI PRODUCTION: Charlie Love (on the left), an archaeologist from Wyoming, has recently created a cement *moai* that was poured into a mold; it weighs a little over 6 tons. It will be the subject of some more experiments in moving the statues. As Charlie informed us, "Yes Virginia, there are more than two ways of moving these things. We are doing it quietly without NOVA's help. This statue has dye in the cement so that the color is nearly identical to fresh Rano Raraku tuff. We are pouring several more, so that if someone wants one, we will have them for sale." Charlie estimates they would cost in the

vicinity of \$2000 plus shipping. The original cast *moai* has an inset rebar loop at the top of the head so that a large front-end loader or a sturdy forklift can move it. The next one will have a plate flush with the top of the head with a socket for a stud bolt that can screw into the top for moving purposes. Now anyone can have their very own *moai* and have their own crack at moving them!

RAPANUIPHILE MARILYN STEARNS described the highlight of a recent trip to the Bridgewater Commons Mall in New Jersey: at the top of an escalator in Macy's, she spotted a three to four foot tall plastic *moai*, in a light mottled greyish color, nestled into the edge of a Hawaiian Luau promotion. Although this borderline kitsch and its significance were probably beyond many of the customers, it made Marilyn's day!

What's New in Polynesia

Pitcairn

A NEW AND REVISED *Guide to Pitcairn* is now available. This colorful publication takes into account the latest historical research and theories and reflects changes on the island. The guide has colorful photographs. It is available from Pitcairn Island Museum, PO Box 105 696, Auckland NZ for US\$12 plus postage (the postage to the US is quoted as \$9.20).

Tahiti

THREE YOUNG RAPANUI ARTISTS, Andres (Panda) Pakarati, Luis (Tito) Araki, and Christian Silva, represented Rapa Nui at Tatau Taputapuetea, a Tahitian Tattoo Festival that took place this spring on Raiatea. The event drew nearly 5000 people and attracted artists from Samoa, the Marquesas, Tahiti, Aotearoa, as well as the US, Canada, Switzerland, Germany and France.

Juan Fernández Islands

SIXTEEN PERSONS from the Juan Fernández archipelago are being treated in the clinic at the El Salvador Hospital in Valparaíso for depression, said to be caused by lack of opportunities for women to work, and the isolated living conditions of those islands. A Valparaíso councilman, Manuel Millones, stated that he will propose to the Regional Council (CORE) of the Vth Region that they assign a permanent post to assist the islanders, helping them to combat the problems caused by their remote situation.

The Pacific

THE PLAN TO STORE up to 200,000 tons of weapons-grade plutonium on Wake Island has been abandoned due to negative reaction among Pacific Island countries, but the businessman who had proposed the storage, Alex Copson, complained that an environmental campaign by Greenpeace killed the project. Copson tried to reduce opposition to the plutonium storage plan by announcing that one billion dollars would be put aside for an environmental and educational trust for the Pacific region.

Pacific Islands Report, 4 April 2000

PALMYRA ATOLL is being purchased by The Nature Conser-

vancy in order to guarantee the preservation of its pristine marine wilderness. The uninhabited network of 52 small islands and adjacent corals reefs was bought from the former owners for an undisclosed price, said to be in the range of \$30 million. Palmyra is considered a territory of the United States and The Nature Conservancy hopes that the US Fish and Wildlife Service will administer it as a wildlife refuge. The Energy Department wanted to use Palmyra as a nuclear waste dump in the 1970s, and more recently some entrepreneurs wanted it for storing chemical and nuclear waste.

What's New in Hangaroa

THE FRAGILE REED BOAT, *La Viracocha*, that set sail from Arica on the 25th of February (see RNJ: Vol. 14:1) reached Rapa Nui in April. For a time it was in risk of being left incomunicado in the middle of the Pacific Ocean. Iridium, the company that connected *La Viracocha's* on-board telephone to their satellite, declared itself bankrupt. However, before that happened, *La Viracocha* arrived to its destination. Their closest call happened when, during one night, the lights of a huge merchant ship—a Korean freighter—were seen; it was heading straight for them. After some problems trying to communicate with the ship, it finally changed course, missing the raft by only 200 meters.

After its arrival to Easter Island and because the reeds had rotted, *La Viracocha* was hoisted out of the bay at Hanga Piko and burned. Phil Buck, the leader of the project, plans to build another one, on Rapa Nui, and sail it to Australia. Kitin Muñoz, the adventurer who built the ill-fated *Mata Rangi* (which deteriorated and sank a short while after leaving Rapa Nui—[see RNJ 11(1):43; 11(2):96; and 13(2):58] retorted that this was not a 'real' test of a reed boat because they had used some nylon ropes instead of native materials.

El Mercurio de Santiago 2 April 2000

AN INCIDENT INVOLVING AN ATTACK and a spectacular chase on the island occurred when a 36 year old islander assaulted Judge Bernardo Toro Villarroel with a blunt weapon in Kai Nene supermarket. A policeman was also attacked when he intervened to protect the judge. After the attack, the islander ran over the policeman with a motor vehicle. The judge called for help and two *carabineros* promptly arrived, but the aggressor fled in a jeep. Police quickly stopped the jeep but, upon being asked for documents, the islander drove off, knocking down one of the policemen. The chase ended when the suspect took refuge in the backyard of his own home. In trying to capture him, First Corporal Aquiles Gomez Villalobos was struck on the arm and received a severe wound to his clavicle. The islander was subdued and detained, and will now have to appear before the very same judge whom he attacked. Apparently this incident was connected to an on-going judicial proceeding that involved the Judge.

El Mercurio de Valparaíso, March 27

THE NEWS FROM THE ISLAND has been difficult to sort out lately. Various conflicting reports, delicious rumors, misinformation in

the mainland newspapers, etc., has left us with very few hard facts. We have been informed that the Governor, Don Jacobo Hey, has resigned from his position. However, he has been asked to stay on the job until a replacement can be found. The Mayor, Petero Edmunds, has asked for a leave of absence until the end of his term of office, citing fatigue. The interim mayor appointed by Edmunds is Iovanni Teave, son of Juan Chavez. The council seemingly will hold internal elections, and rumor has it that the most likely to be selected will be Alberto Hotus, as he has the "second majority". The regular elections will be held next October, and we were informed that Edmunds will run for reelection.

SPEAKING OF RUMORS, we have been receiving inquiries about a 'rave' concert that was to be held on Easter Island in May. Young people were scrambling to get seats on a flight so they could attend this event. A lot of email back and forth finally established that yes, a rave was to happen, but had been called off. What about this? A group of young islanders had wanted to host a Techno music concert (a 'rave'). The event was approved, but then the organizers in Santiago with whom the islanders had partnered wanted to pocket half the money and have the dj's stay for only five days, not the ten days that had been agreed upon. So it was cancelled by the islanders involved.

ISLAND CRAFT PERSONS are unhappy with the new *mercado* (see RNJ 14:1, page 23). It seems that guides take their tours to stores owned by their relatives, so few tourists even come to the *mercado*, and business has been very slow. Because of lack of ventilation and numerous windows in the *mercado*, summer heat turns the structure into a hot box, further discouraging visitors. The income of many islanders depends totally upon what they can sell to tourists.

WE HEAR THAT A NEW HOTEL is being built on Apina Street by the Kia Koe travel agency. This latest venture will bring the number of hotels and residenciales up to 47.

FIVE ARTISTS AND PERFORMERS from Rapa Nui recently demonstrated the process and materials used for body designs at an exhibition in New York at the American Museum of Natural History. They also participated in a cross-cultural exchange weekend program, Native Cultures of the Americas.

THE CENTRO DE LOS PADRES, an organization that represents the parents of the students, has expressed concern about drug use among students. A government representative from the continent arrived to the island to discuss the problem with parents.

News from Off-Center

EBAY STRIKES AGAIN! In early April, ebay's auction site advertised for sale a "Rare Easter Island Ancestor Mask" The description read, "A very rare ancestor mask from Easter Island, carved from coral. Not much is known about the mythology and ceremonial background of these masks, which were found by a

French archaeological team (who excavated several burial sites on Easter Island on behalf of the National Museum of Mankind in France) in 1968. According to the research carried out by the scientists, the mask is ca 450 years old; whereby several very similar masks were found of a much earlier date. This artifact comes from the estate of the doctor who was a member of the excavation team. An appraisal and a hand written note by the late doctor also comes with the artifact. The appraisal was later issued by a gallery specialized on Oceanic Art in Germany. Measurements: 19 cm high x 16 cm across x 6 cm deep."

There are a couple of things wrong here. This mask is wholly outside the artistic milieu of Rapa Nui. As for the "... several very similar masks" of an earlier date: where might these be? Who has ever seen one? Who might have been the members of this mysterious French team in 1968? The date does not coincide with any expedition we have ever heard of. As for the appraisal, anybody can write one of those. The "rare Easter Island mask" was bought by some speculator for \$850 and he/she now is the proud owner of what appears to be an authentic fake.

Reviews

 *New Zealand Handbook*, 5th edition.

Jane King, 1999; 512 pages, illustrations, photos and maps.

US\$ 18.95; UK £ 12.99; CAN\$ 29.50

ISBN: 1-56691-165-6.

Moon Travel Handbooks, Emeryville, CA

Review by Steven Roger Fischer

The fifth edition of the *New Zealand Handbook*, one of the celebrated series of Moon Travel Handbooks, is the latest update, impeccably researched, of what must be one of the most useful travel books on New Zealand in print today. If its major competitor—Lonely Planet's encyclopedic *New Zealand*—excels in minutiae, Moon's *New Zealand Handbook* stands out for its reliable compactness and handy, on-the-scene precision. Small enough to toss into a backpack and hardly feel it there, it supplies all the local information one will ever need on virtually every tourist spot on both the South Island and North Island, with Stewart Island in the far south included in surprising detail. (One looks in vain for the Chatham Islands, however, which should be included in future editions.) Regional, local and city maps fill the tome. The many illustrations and black-and-white photographs add to the book's cultural attraction. "Special Topics" are generously sprinkled throughout the volume—such as "Outdoor Health", "Glowworms", "Where the Mountain Marries the Mist". The 49-page introduction is a brief, refreshing dip into the pool of New Zealand history, society and touring, with many handy hints for the first-time visitor. The detailed regional chapters carry one from Northland to Southland, providing accommodations, restaurants, historical background, cultural sites and fascinating asides that will be certain to educate and entertain with equal delight.